

Mar 08, 2017 | Written by Adam Aziz | 0



KUALA LUMPUR (March 8): Career progression, or the lack of it, is the main reason that 44% of Malaysian women employees left their companies, compared with 36% of their global counterparts, according to the latest survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

The report on "Winning the fight for female talent: How to gain the diversity edge through inclusive recruitment" focused on employment of female talents through a survey conducted on 4,792 professionals, of whom 103 were Malaysians.

The report also found that 74% of Malaysian women see active diversity progress as a concern when deciding whether or not to work for a company, compared with 56% of women globally.

Employers are aware, according to the report. 76% of them have incorporated diversity and inclusion into their employment brands, and the figure rises to 88% among big companies with more than 10,000 employees, PwC said.

More Malaysian women highlight the presence of role models as an important factor when deciding where they work compared with their global peers, PwC Malaysia managing partner Sridharan Nair said in a statement today.

"Seventy-one per cent of Malaysian female talents also look at the diversity of a company's leadership team before they decide to join a company.

"This sends a strong signal for companies to invest in a diverse leadership team and to hold their leaders to high standards in role modelling the right behaviour," Sridharan added.

Explicit hiring targets have driven organisations worldwide to increase their gender diversity efforts, PwC said, bringing competition for female talent to escalate to a whole new level.

The professional services firm said 78% of large organisations around the world say they're actively seeking to hire more women – especially for more senior level positions.

With more opportunities in line, female employees are not afraid to voice out if their expectations are not addressed, PwC Malaysia diversity leader Chin Suit Fang said.

"This serves as an important reminder for organisations to commit to a culture of inclusion in the way they attract, engage, train, remunerate and empower their people," Chin added.

PwC also indicated that employers can appear more attractive to female talents by focusing on flexible working arrangement and a culture of work-life balance, presenting career progression

opportunities, and providing competitive wages and other financial incentives.

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